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ALEXANDER JOHNSTON.*

THE old adage that death loves a shining mark has seldom received a more sorrowful fulfilment than when, on the 20th of last July, Professor Alexander Johnston breathed his last. His death, although foreshadowed by a long period of illness and decline, caused a thrill of profound grief throughout the large circle of his acquaintance. Professor Johnston's connection with this College, although brief, had been sufficiently long to win for him a warm place in many hearts, and it is safe to say that no instructor has ever enjoyed in a larger measure the affection and esteem of his colleagues and pupils.

The facts of Professor Johnston's life are already well known. Born in Brooklyn in 1849, he spent the first twelve years of his life in that city, removing with his parents to Astoria, L. I., in 1861, where he studied for a short time in a public school, and completed his preparation for college under the tuition of a private tutor, Professor Alanson Palmer, of New York City. His father, who entered the army as a volunteer in 1861, returned in 1863, broken in health, and shortly after moved to Illinois, leaving young Alexander behind with Mr. John McAlan, his maternal uncle, under whose guardianship he completed his education. He entered Rutgers College as a Freshman in 1866, and after a brilliant and popular career, in which he became a recognized leader both in scholarship and athletics, and won several valuable prizes in college competitions, graduated in 1870 as first-honor man and valedictorian of his class.

Young Johnston, although an assiduous student and an omnivorous reader of books, had little of the bookworm in his composition. He was as fond of play as of work, and entered into the recreations of college life with a zest and energy which was only equalled by his devotion to his studies. It is said that he excelled in all the studies of the curriculum, being especially proficient in the classics, a taste for which he retained to the end of his life.

He returned to New Brunswick after graduation, and spent some time in post-graduate study and in teaching in the Grammar School; then entered the office of Ex-Governor Ludlow as a law student, and was admitted to practice at the New Jersey bar in 1876. Shortly after his admission to practice he left New Brunswick and went to Norwalk, Ct., where he married. In 1879, his first book, the "History of American Politics," appeared. In 1880 he started a school,

* By permission, from the Princeton College Bulletin, November, 1889.

to the management of which and to literary work he devoted his energies till the autumn of 1883, when he received a call to the Chair of Jurisprudence and Political Economy in this College. In January, 1884, he commenced his professorial duties, and his life from that time up to the day of his death was identified with Princeton, whose fame he was contributing to extend by his brilliant achievements as teacher and writer.

When it is remembered that Professor Johnston was barely forty years old when he died, and that his literary activity was crowded into the last ten years of his life, the list of works published during that period gives evidence of extraordinary fecundity. His "History of American Politics," published by the Holts in 1879, gave him at once a position in the front rank of American political writers. That book alone, had the author never written another word, was sufficient to make a great reputation. It is a fine embodiment of all the characteristic features of Professor Johnston's method and style. Clear, compact, straightforward, and simple, its mastery of facts and its generalizations are admirable, reminding one in these respects of Guizot's History of Civilization.

During his residence in Norwalk, Professor Johnston wrote the parts on American Political History in Lalor's Encyclopædia, his articles comprising perhaps one fourth of the contents of the three volumes, and being remarkable for the painstaking industry and accurate knowledge of facts which they evinced.

During his connection with Princeton there followed in rapid succession his School History; a collection of Representative Orations; the volume on "Connecticut" for the Commonwealth Series, a masterpiece of its kind; a number of articles in the American Supplement to the Encyclopædia Britannica; the splendid article, or rather treatise, on "The United States," in the ninth edition of the Encyclopædia Britannica; the strikingly able and original article on the American Constitution in the New Princeton Review; and many other articles in periodicals and reviews, besides frequent contributions to the "Topics of the Times" in the Century Magazine, and to the editorial departments of other publications. Besides the published works he left two books in manuscript form, which will in due time be given to the public.

Professor Johnston's later works fully sustain his reputation as a political writer. The qualities which are noticeable in his first volume are present in these, and there is evidence of a development in richness of knowledge, breadth of understanding, depth of insight, and

sobriety of judgment. The work on Connecticut is perhaps his masterpiece. It is a model of compact and lucid writing, and forcible and judicious thinking. It is more than a narrative, it is a piece of historical portraiture which presents the lineaments of a growing state.

In the strict sense of the term, Professor Johnston could not be called a philosophical thinker. To apprehend the underlying principles of things was not his forte, but rather to discover and formulate those middle axioms, to use a Baconian phrase, which are obtained directly by generalizations from experience. His mind also shunned abstractions, and theory had little attraction for him except so far as it could be found embodied in fact and experience. He was naturally averse to all *a priori* speculation, and found in history and its method the true basis for the science of politics. In his point of view he was a born jurist. The idea of positive law seemed to underlie and color his conceptions of every subject. This appeared most clearly in his method of dealing with the problems of political economy. That science may be considered in its relations with either ethics or jurisprudence. It was characteristic of Johnston to emphasize the latter, and one of the marked results of his teaching was the success with which he impressed his own mode of thinking upon the minds of his students.

As a teacher he had few equals. He succeeded, apparently with ease, in arousing and retaining the enthusiastic interest of his pupils, and his class-room with its throng of eager listeners had little in common with the traditional models of pedagogic dullness and formality. His success was due, in part, to his personality, which had in it something novel and refreshing, in part to his enthusiasm in his own work, and in large part, no doubt, to his method of presenting his subject. In his lectures he followed a concrete method, giving at the start a clear and concise definition of the principle involved, and then literally flooding it with a stream of pertinent and well selected illustrations. This latter was the most characteristic feature of his method. His faculty of teaching by example was extraordinary, and it was the wealth of illustration which he brought to bear upon a subject that revealed the extent and discriminating character of his reading, and the accuracy and power of his memory. Add to these qualities a never failing humor, and a genuine and hearty interest in the welfare of his pupils, and the strong hold which he invariably secured upon their interest and affection can readily be understood.

Professor Johnston carried into his general college relations the

same generous spirit that had characterized his own undergraduate life. In the professorial chair he still continued to believe in play as well as work and was an earnest and intelligent advocate of college sports. The students soon learned to trust him, and found in him not only a ready and generous sympathizer in all their affairs, but also an intelligent and judicious counsellor. He was thoroughly and consistently democratic in his ideas of college government, advocating on all occasions those old-fashioned ideas of personal freedom and personal responsibility, which he wished to see realized not only in the policy of the college, but also in the policy of the nation. To this end, his voice was always raised in behalf of what he deemed enlightened progress: the enlargement and development of the college curriculum, the removal of unnecessary restrictions, and the realization of the widest range of privilege consistent with the necessities of college discipline. To the consideration of practical affairs he brought to bear a clear and well trained intelligence, quick to realize the exigencies of any particular case and fertile in expedients to meet them.

The most attractive side of Professor Johnston's personality was reserved for those who were privileged to be his companions and friends. He was a brilliant conversationalist, possessed of a never failing fountain of wit and humor and an inexhaustible fund of anecdote, in the relation of which he displayed a unique power. It was a rare privilege to spend an hour with him when he was at his best. The recollection of many such comes back to memory as these lines are being penned, and causes a feeling of poignant regret that they shall recur no more, except in retrospect. None but those who enjoyed his friendship know what a genial soul the world has lost, and only they who knew the man as the central figure in the circle of his own home can appreciate the loss of the stricken family who mourn his untimely death.

The following is an approximately complete list of Professor Johnston's writings:—

1. History of American Politics, published in 1877 by Henry Holt & Co.
2. Political Articles in Lalor's *Encyclopædia of Political Science*. Published in Chicago, 1881.
3. Genesis of a New England State. In "*Johns Hopkins Historical Studies*." 1883.
4. Political Articles in the Supplement to the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. 1880.
5. Representative Orations. G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1884.
6. School History of the United States. Henry Holt & Co. 1885.

7. "Connecticut," for American Commonwealth Series. Houghton, Mifflin, & Co. 1887.

8. "The American Constitution," and other articles, for the New Princeton Review. July, 1888.

9. "The United States," in 9th edition of Encyclopædia Britannica. 1887.

Besides the following unpublished works: —

10. "The United States," taken from article in the Britannica.

11. Shorter History of the United States for Schools.

And in addition many articles, signed and unsigned, for the Century Magazine, the Nation, and other publications.

LEO LESQUEREUX.

LEO LESQUEREUX was born, November 18th, 1806, in the village of Fleurier, Neuchâtel. His father, a manufacturer of watch-springs, was descended from a Huguenot family which took refuge in Switzerland after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. When a boy Lesquereux was of an adventurous spirit, and on one excursion fell from the edge of a high cliff, but almost miraculously escaped without permanent injury except a deafness which a few years later was intensified so that during the greater part of his life he could converse only with the greatest difficulty. He entered upon his academic studies in 1821, in a college of the town of Neuchâtel, and graduated with distinction in 1827. The slender means of his family forced him to support himself, in part, while a student, and after graduating he went to Eisenach, where he acted as tutor in a noble family. While at Eisenach he became engaged to a daughter of General Von Wolffskel, an *attaché* of the court of the Duke of Saxe-Weimar, to whom he was a short time afterwards married. In 1829 he returned to Switzerland, and became Principal of the College of La Chaux-de-Fonds in the Canton of Neuchâtel.

After his marriage, his deafness increased to such an extent as to unfit him for the profession of teacher, and, medical skill proving of no avail in his case, he was forced to gain a meagre living by engraving watch-cases, — a pitiable condition for one of his intelligence and education, who had only recently married a lady of noble birth. His health soon began to suffer, when his father offered to give him a share in his business, which, since it was on a small scale, did not improve his financial condition very much. He at this time began to devote his